

CAFOD's Seven Year Plan

For presentation to the Alliance of Religions and Conservation

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) is the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The environment is not a new issue for CAFOD; we have always understood that a healthy environment is vital to ensuring long-term and sustainable approaches to poverty reduction. It is almost universally accepted that those who will be impacted first and worst by climate change will be those either living in poverty or in vulnerable situations. It is with these people that CAFOD works most closely and, considering the future predictions of climate change for Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is clear that CAFOD will be increasingly called upon by partners to help reduce people's vulnerability to climate variability through a range of adaptation and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies.

In addition to helping people adapt to the impacts of climate change, CAFOD has a responsibility to address the causes of climate change which are largely the result of over-consumption by people living in the northern hemisphere. As such, climate change is a justice issue. Through our networks, supporters, the Church, coalitions, and especially through Catholic Social Teaching (CST) as well as the *LiveSimply* programme, CAFOD is well situated to encourage our supporters, government and international institutions to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases and provide the necessary resources for adaptation and mitigation to developing countries.

The environment and climate change is a cross-cutting corporate priority for CAFOD.

Assets

We are very serious about taking responsibility for our own environmental impact and reducing our carbon footprint. We will achieve a dramatic reduction in our footprint with the move to a new building in 2010. The building is designed to achieve an 'Excellent' rating on the Building Research Establishments Environmental Assessment. This assessment covers a range of environmental indicators including energy, transport, pollution, land use, construction waste, materials and water use. For example the building is designed to use grey water (rain water collected from the roof) and low water-use sanitary fittings. This will enable us to reduce each member of staff's water use by 75%. Our actions will not stop with the new building. We will establish a programme of activity to monitor and therefore reduce our footprint on an ongoing basis. We know from an audit we commissioned that our biggest impact is through flying. As an international development organisation we must accept that flying is an essential part of our work, but we will seek to reduce the number of flights through the use of new technology and will always opt for greener transport where appropriate. In support of this work we will pilot a carbon as well financial budget for each team within the organisation.

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Education and Lifestyles

CAFOD is very well respected for its educational materials and the work we undertake with schools and young people. Over the last two years we have produced a significant number of resources which are designed for pupils and teachers of all ages. We have picked up issues of climate change, faith, and stewardship under a banner of living simply and sustainably.

We have provided interactive board games on climate change, liturgical resources, and produced schemes of work to complement sustainable schools initiatives, PSHE, RE, sciences and collective worship. We have an ongoing developing leadership initiative with 16-18 year olds on global sustainability and have commissioned a play, "*Degrees of Change*", designed to be performed by 15-19 year olds. The emphasis of our work now is about continuing to offer in-service training to teachers on how to incorporate climate change and the environment into their teaching practice and to underpin their school ethos. We have worked with the National Catholic Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers to create a guidance template for teachers in Catholic schools on Stewardship and Creation, thereby ensuring these issues are embedded at policy and guidance level for core Religious Education.

In recognising that it is the lifestyles and actions of the global north which have caused climate change and other environmental concerns we see ourselves as part of the solution. We will continue our public education work through campaigns, media and other communication devices to alert people to the impact of their lifestyles on the wider world and encourage them to live more simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor.

Pastoral Care

We know that our local partners are already dealing with the consequences of climate change. CAFOD also understands that the threat of climate change cannot be understood in isolation; it is one of a number of global environmental changes that are intimately linked. In order to address climate change, issues such as water scarcity, deforestation and biofuels for example, must also be understood and addressed. This broader analysis fits with Catholic Social Teaching since it focuses upon a wider social and environmental justice agenda and urges individuals not to separate one element from the debate.

We are going to witness the destruction of many eco-systems presenting us with a host of humanitarian challenges – food shortages, water shortages and a rising incidence of resource based conflicts. We are looking at a human population of around 9 billion by 2050 – approximately 2.5 billion more than today. We will seek to understand the nature of hazards that are going to manifest in the future through analysis undertaken with our academic partners including University College London (UCL) and the University of Liverpool. We will also start to undertake 'futures scanning' – looking to the future in order to be able to provide information to partners regarding the types of risk they may need to prepare for.

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The main aim of CAFOD's programmatic work on climate change will be to build adaptive capacity and reduce people's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Using a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach we will work towards reducing people's vulnerability to climate change impacts rather than trying to develop specific adaptation projects. Our analysis is that where we thoroughly integrate an understanding of climate change impacts into our DRR work we will in effect be doing adaptation work.

Media and Advocacy

CAFOD is actively engaged in seeking long-term solutions to environmental and climate change issues through changes in policies and practices in government, regional and international institutions and individual lifestyles. CAFOD will continue to mobilise the Catholic Community in England and Wales to influence decision makers on behalf of our partners in the global south. Alongside this we will continue to make direct constructive representation to governments and other institutions. Our initial work is directed at seeking a comprehensive, legally binding framework to succeed the Kyoto Treaty under the UN. Longer-term, CAFOD will work with our partners to identify and investigate other issues such as land rights, trade and agriculture which are affecting the poorest and most disadvantaged communities. We will also promote low carbon development as part of a green new deal. Economic growth is necessary for development to occur but must not be seen as an end in itself. Developing countries must be given the necessary resources – finance and technology – to ensure they are able to grow in a green way and not have to rely on the short nature of carbon-based growth. CAFOD will seek to ensure that it is green development rather than growth; to ensure that the poorest and most disadvantaged benefit.

We will continue to engage with the media to keep environmental and climate change issues in the spotlight and on the agenda of decision makers. We will also seek to work collaboratively with media outlets on ideas to encourage people to take action on reducing emissions.

Partnerships

CAFOD is a partnership organisation. We work with partners in the global south, with coalitions and networks worldwide and within Europe, and believe that we are part of the Catholic Community in England and Wales. Our membership of Caritas Internationalis and CIDSE as well as other secular networks, such as Climate Action Network, will be important moving forward. CAFOD is also facilitating the Catholic Coalition on Environmental Justice (working title) to better co-ordinate our actions and provide a stronger more effective voice of the Catholic Community in England and Wales.